



CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS: TAKING ACTION ON THE BP OIL SPILL

Uncovered the Truth about the Size of the Oil Spill

First BP told America the oil spill was 1,000 barrels a day. Then 5,000 barrels a day. But after Congress brought in outside experts and forced the release of video footage, scientists have placed the spill at between 53,000 and 62,000 barrels of oil per day. That means 4.9 million barrels of oil leaked into the Gulf over 87 days. That is the largest oil spill in U.S. history. Knowing the true size of the spill was a critical piece of information for families and businesses living and working in coastal communities.



Forced BP to Make Live Video of the Oil Spill Available to the Public

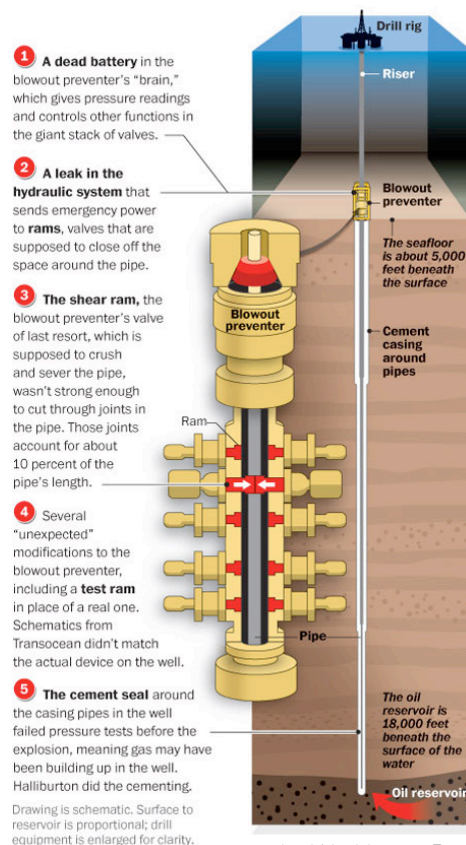
It took 23 days for BP to produce images from the leak site. After this shocking footage appeared, Congress was able to pressure BP into releasing a live video feed from the ocean floor. The response from the public has been overwhelming, with House websites receiving over a million hits in just the first few days.

Uncovered Key Evidence in Blowout Preventer Failure and Mistakes that Caused Rig Explosion

Investigations by Congress uncovered the missteps and safety violations that led to the Deepwater Horizon explosion, killing 11 people. The blowout preventer was riddled with problems, including a significant leak in a main hydraulic system that was improperly modified and not powerful enough to cut through joints in the drill pipe. Plus the "deadman switch" - the last line of defense - had a dead battery. Poor cementing and fatal decisions made by BP in the hours and minutes before the explosion have also been uncovered by Congress.

Cut BP's Use of Dangerous Chemical Dispersants

Despite the assertions made by BP that dispersants could be safely used on the surface and at the sea floor, Congressional Democrats conducted oversight of the 1.8 million gallons of dispersants applied to the Gulf. Warning of potential harm that long-term use of chemicals could have on the marine environment, food chain and families, Congress continued aggressive oversight aimed at minimizing the amounts used and assessing their impact.



The Washington Post

\$500 Million from BP for a New Research Fund

Congress has called on companies responsible for the disaster to pay for outside research and development from independent scientists to ensure this never happens again. Including oil clean-up technology and improved deep water solutions to stopping oil leaks in the future. Following this request, BP pledged to donate \$500 million to establish this fund which will also assess the ecological impacts on the Gulf.

Protecting Families and Businesses in Coastal Communities

Congress has held numerous oversight hearings with the companies responsible for the oil spill in the Gulf: BP, Halliburton and Transocean. Congress has also called in the Administration to ensure that clean up and recovery efforts by local, state and federal agencies are in place to protect families and businesses in the Gulf. Congress is providing oversight of the FDA to ensure the food supply and the fishing industry are protected from chemical dispersants.

Creating an Independent Panel

Congress called on President Obama to create an independent, blue-ribbon commission to investigate the BP oil spill, ensure that clean up and recovery efforts are enforced, and to make safety recommendations on deep water drilling moving forward. The President responded by creating a bi-partisan commission headed by former Sen. Bob Graham & former EPA chief William Reilly. Reps. Ed Markey and Louis Capps passed legislation, by a vote of 420 to 1, to give this panel subpoena power. However, Republicans in the Senate have blocked this important measure.

Safety and Liability Legislation: Making Sure this Never Happens Again

Democratic leaders in Congress passed sweeping drilling safety and reform legislation last Congress to prevent future disaster like the BP oil spill. The CLEAR ACT (H.R. 3534) would have implemented strong new safety measures for oil drilling, and royalty recovery legislation that will cut the deficit by up to \$53 billion. The House also passed the Offshore Oil and Gas Worker Whistleblower Protection Act (H.R. 5851) by a vote of 315 to 93.

